**Title:** Need to exempt coconut arecanut, rubber and spices from new import policy to safeguard the interest of farmers of Kerala.

SHRI K. MURALEEDHARAN (CALICUT): I would like to bring to your kind notice the pitiable condition of the farmers in Kerala due to the recent liberalised import policy introduced by the Government of India. The main agricultural products in Kerala are coconuts, arecanuts, rubber and spices. Kerala is the largest producing State of the above products. Though paddy is cultivated widely in the State, Kerala is depending upon other States for its need of food grains. Most of the farmers are small holders and they depend upon the income derived from their agricultural products for their livelihood. The price of the rubber was already reduced considerably due to the import allowed by the Government of India earlier. The liberalised policy of import now introduced has caused further reduction in the price of rubber. The rubber farmers numbering more than ten lakhs and their families find it very difficult to earn their loans taken by them in connection with the production of rubber. In Kerala, most of the farmers are coconut growers. The liberalised import policy declared by the Government has caused the reduction of price of coconuts from Rs.6,000/- to Rs.3,000/- per thousand of coconuts. Also, the price of copra, a product of coconut has been reduced. In Kerala, thousand crores of coconuts are dumped for want of purchasers. The coconut growers in Kerala are now in a starving condition. In this connection, I may point out that the support price of copra now declared by the Government of India is very low and it has not made any movement in the market. Coffee also shows reduction of price due to the new policy. I request that the Government may take steps to safeguard the interests of the farmers of Kerala by exempting above items from the new import policy.

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**14.33 hrs.**